

Board of Selectmen

Town of Upton



Massachusetts

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Kenneth E. Picard, Chairman

James A. Brochu

Robert J. Fleming

TOWN MANAGER

Blythe C. Robinson

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Memo To: Board of Selectmen
From: Blythe C. Robinson, Town Manager
Date: April 5, 2013
Re: Town Manager's Weekly Report

Warrants:

- Payroll: \$ 75,932.82
- Expense Warrant: \$972,073.06

For Your Information/Follow Up:

- As you know, several months ago the Town received complaints from neighbors who live near the G&U Railroad regarding the length of time trains were idling on site. The neighbors believed that the trains were idling longer than allowed by law in Massachusetts (30 minutes if they are not working). A meeting was held last week that included the EPA, DEP, FRA and G&U railroad to go over the law, learn how the Upton yard operates and determine what if anything needed to be done to address this issue. We were informed that the meeting was productive, and that since the complaint came in the railroad has made some changes that result in trains not idling unnecessarily beyond what is allowed by law. We have been told that the G&U is following the spirit of the law and that no violations were found. That they well understand the laws, want to do the right thing, and their operations are typical for a working rail yard. We have not received any complaints in quite a while, and so at this point consider the matter to be closed.
- As we continue to prepare for the anticipated move out of Town Hall, we have had our auction company come out and take pictures of all of the surplus items identified. They are preparing all of the auction background and we anticipate releasing those in the next week or two. We will post a news announcement to the Town website so that town residents are aware of it in case anyone wants to bid on these items and keep them local.
- This week we received a letter from Governor Patrick informing us that the administration has filed a transportation bond bill that includes \$300 million for Chapter 90 projects. That represents a 50% increase in the program and translates to \$479,496 for Upton. In terms of being able to repair our roads and slow down the amount we are getting behind each year to maintain our inventory. An MMA alert was also sent out indicating that there was general agreement between the House and Senate on a framework for financing this plan, and urging all communities to press their legislators to vote favorably about this. We will let Rep. Peterson and Senator Moore know we'd like to see Chapter 90 increased.

- Next Tuesday is the bid opening for the Town Hall project – to be done at 11 AM in the Main Hall. As you know we're estimating that the project will come in at \$5.5 to \$6.0 million (not including the almost \$500,000 already approved and spent to get to this point). We learned with interest that two other communities surrounding us are expecting to pay more to renovate their Town Halls. Westborough recently approved \$7.3 million to renovate their 18,000 square foot Town Hall, and Hopedale expects that theirs will cost \$6 - \$7 million to renovate about 12,000 square feet.
- The bid opening on the Police station exterior is scheduled for Thursday at 2 PM.
- The Cable Advisory Committee met this week for the second time. They are learning about the Town's cable system, the standards for cable TV in the state, and gearing up for a renewal negotiation of the Town's license with Comcast.